

Statement by President Donald Tusk on the Brexit negotiations

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Steel: Global Forum takes important steps to tackle overcapacity

At the Ministerial meeting of the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity, held in Paris on 20 September, the world's biggest steel-producing nations agreed to further reduce capacity wherever necessary, avoid that overcapacity is exacerbated in the future, as well as to work to eliminate subsidies which cause overcapacity.

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness **Jyrki Katainen**, who co-chaired the Paris meeting, said: *"This sends a clear message: we will not repeat the costly mistakes of the past, and must tackle excess capacity and its root causes to avoid dire social, economic, trade and political consequences in the future. This will protect growth and jobs in an efficient, sustainable EU steel industry. A lot of work lies ahead though and all members of the Global Forum will have to continue implementing their commitments resolutely and report to G20 Leaders."*

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"The global challenge of overcapacity has strained trade relations and the global trade architecture to its breaking point. Progress in this Forum at this sensitive time demonstrates that multilateral cooperation is not only possible, but that it*

is actually the best tool to tackle global challenges. Putting this agreed package in place is something that the European Union will now follow closely. Our workforce and our industry depend on these commitments being carried out."

The Global Forum is a key body in the fight against persistent global overcapacity in the steel sector. It has already produced tangible results, such as producing reliable and shared statistics on steel production, capacity and excess capacity amongst major steel producers, and starting efforts to cut overcapacity where it is the most needed. This week's commitments build on the engagements made by minister's at their 2017 meeting in Berlin.

The body will finalise its assessment of subsidies leading to overcapacity by the end of the year. In the face of persistent global overcapacity despite recent efforts, the Forum will in 2019 identify further reductions to be undertaken. Finally, the Forum agreed to monitor global capacity increases regularly to stop such a serious case of overcapacity happening again in the future.

Background

The steel sector is a vital industry for the European Union's economy and occupies a central position in global value chains, providing jobs for hundreds of thousands of European citizens.

The global surplus in steelmaking capacity reached around 540 million metric tonnes in 2017 – a drop from 2016 peaks but still the second highest level in history. This has driven down steel prices to unsustainable levels in recent years and had a damaging impact on the steel sector, as well as related industries and jobs.

In March 2016 the Commission issued a Communication presenting a series of measures to support competitiveness of the EU steel industry.

The Commission has acted among others through trade defence, imposing antidumping and anti-subsidy duties, to shield the EU's steel industry from the effects of unfair trade. The EU currently has an unprecedented number of trade defence measures in place targeting unfair imports of steel products, with a total of 53 anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures. The EU has also activated all legal and political tools at its disposal to fight unjustified US 232 measures.

However, these efforts can only address the effects of global overcapacity on trade – not its root causes. To that effect, the EU participated in the creation in December 2016 of the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity. Bringing together 33 economies – all G20 members plus some other interested OECD countries – it includes all the world's major producers.

Since its creation the participating economies have exchanged data on steel capacity, subsidies and other support measures. This increase in transparency has enabled the Global Forum members to focus on the underlying causes of the

problem of overcapacity in steel and agree on concrete steps to address them by enhancing the role of the market and changing the structure of the industry.

For more information

[November 2017 Global Forum package of policy solutions to overcapacity in steel sector](#)

Main topics and media events 24 September – 7 October 2018

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Weekly schedule of President Donald Tusk

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[ECI Minority SafePack presented at the EESC](#)



Despite an overly complicated ECI tool, one million signatures collected for diversity in Europe

At its plenary on 20 September, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) invited the initiators of the European Citizens' Initiative Minority SafePack – represented by Loránt Vincze, president of the Federal Union of

European Nationalities – to present their request, which is aimed at improving the protection of national and linguistic minorities in Europe

Mr Vincze and the proponents of the 5th successful ECI feel that the rights of national and linguistic minorities are not always respected. “As regards the different languages in Europe, only 24 are official languages, but we have around 60 different languages in Europe. Therefore, it is not easy for minorities to preserve their original language. In many cases the languages and cultures of minorities are even endangered”, said Mr Vincze who was also calling for the creation of a Language Diversity Centre in the EU.

Mr Vincze thanked the EESC for being the first EU institution to give this successful initiative a platform. With regard to the upcoming European elections, he called on the EESC members to include the claims of the Minority SafePack in the debate on the future of Europe. Discussion should also be encouraged in the 28 capitals and in all major cities, not least in order to gather momentum and make the European Commission act. The organisers have not yet decided when to submit their ECI officially to the Commission. Since they are not tied to any deadline, they will first explore what could be the maximum outcome of their initiative by meeting EU high-level decision-makers, revealed Mr Vincze.

In his statement, Mr Vincze also complained about the ECI as an instrument, which is excessively complicated and expensive for ordinary citizens, and described the many hurdles his organisation had to overcome. This is a major complaint that the EESC has already been reiterating for many years and that has finally convinced the Commission to carry out a review of this important instrument for citizens’ participation at European level. This review is currently on its way with the Commission, Parliament and Council having already entered the official consultations.

Without commenting on the content of the ECI, EESC members underlined the importance of and the EESC’s commitment to supporting minorities and citizens’ initiatives in general.

“This ECI on the Minority SafePack is an important one. It revolves around people and it concerns people’s lives”, underlined President Luca Jahier, who has made Europe’s cultural heritage one of the focuses of his presidency. He acknowledged the great success of the initiative, stating that this accomplishment is proof that European citizens can build the future of Europe, provided they work together and raise their voices in concert.

Background

We call upon the EU to improve the protection of persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities and to strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in the Union.

With this demand, engaged Europeans started their European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) Minority SafePack, reaching the necessary one million signatures in 11 countries before the deadline in April 2018 (a minimum of seven countries is required). On 8 May, the Citizens’ Committee, the Federal

Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), and local organisers handed over 1 320 053 signatures (1 128 385 were validated), collected in 28 Member States.

The proponents call for a legal framework that guarantees the protection of autochthonous minorities. Demands in the ECI aim at

- creating favourable conditions for linguistic and cultural diversity to thrive by stopping the assimilation of autochthonous minority communities and language groups;
- letting minorities have a say in decisions that affect their lives;
- letting them exercise their cultural, educational and linguistic rights autonomously, and
- making them feel entirely at home on the territory where they have traditionally lived.

The [ECI Minority SafePack](#) includes nine proposals helping to achieve the ECI's targets and which should be included in existing EU policies.